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**A SHORT
GUIDE TO TAKHT-I-BAHI**

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A SHORT
GUIDE TO TAKHT-I-BAHI

BY

M. A. Shakur, B.A., M. R. A. S.,
Curator, Peshawar Museum, Peshawar.



WITH A FOREWORD

BY

Col. G. L. Mallam, C.I.E., Bar-At-Law.,

COMMISSIONER AND SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT, N.W.F.P. AND
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DEDICATED TO
THE ESTEEMED AND LOVING MEMORY OF
THE LATE SIR AUREL STEIN WHO
DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THIS NOBLE
CAUSE AND TO WHOM I OWE
EVERYTHING THAT
I NOW KNOW.



FOREWORD

It is some years since I climbed the hill from the motor road to visit the famous Buddhist ruins at Takht-i-Bahi. But I can well remember trying helplessly with my scanty store of archaeological knowledge to bridge the vast gap between the life I knew in the villages and towns in the plain below and this ancient civilisation, whose relics lay before me. Where indeed in the Peshawar Valley of today can you find the counterpart of the order, the seclusion, the endless meditation of a Buddhist Monastery?

And so the ordinary sight-seer is in need of the friendly aid of a concise and attractively-worded "Guide", such as this which Mr. M. Abdul Shakur has so successfully attempted, to enable him to picture the life which centred round these long deserted court-yards and passages, cells and stupas, and to help him to imbibe something of the culture and devotion which inspired the exquisite sculptures of the Greeco-Buddhist period.

Here is a treasure left by past generations to our keeping. We cannot appreciate its value, nor preserve it intact for the benefit of future gene-

rations, without a wider knowledge of its meaning and it is this knowledge that Mr. Abdul Shakur has set himself to impart in a simple and attractive form. There is no one more fitted for this worthy task, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Abdul Shakur's enthusiasm and public appreciation of his present work, will lead him on to the accomplishment of the many similar tasks that await him in the wealth of ancient monuments which lend so much fascination to the North-West Frontier of India.

Peshawar,
15th June, 1946.

G. L. Mallam.

P R E F A C E

Visitors to the North-West Frontier Province in general and to the Peshawar Museum in particular often ask for a 'handbook' to the best preserved Buddhist site at Takht-i-Bahi. But the Department of Archaeology has been prevented from publishing such a book by the exigencies of war and other reasons. The necessity for one is greatly felt, especially by foreigners. No doubt, the 'Reports' published by the Department contain authentic and exhaustive accounts of the excavations conducted at the site, but they are so many and the results of scientific investigations embodied therein so scattered that a visitor experiences difficulty in obtaining a connected and continuous account of it. Until such time that the Department is able to bring out such a guide I have ventured to place in the hands of visitors and all those interested in the glorious past of the province this short book of information in which I have tried to include all relevant material from the Archaeological Survey Reports published from time to time. This work does not, however, claim perfection, but to make it as useful as

possible for the general reader, I have tried to avoid technical problems and controversial matters, and at the same time present a faithful account of the ruins as they may be seen today.

Peshawar, the
31st. May 1946.

M. A. Shakur.

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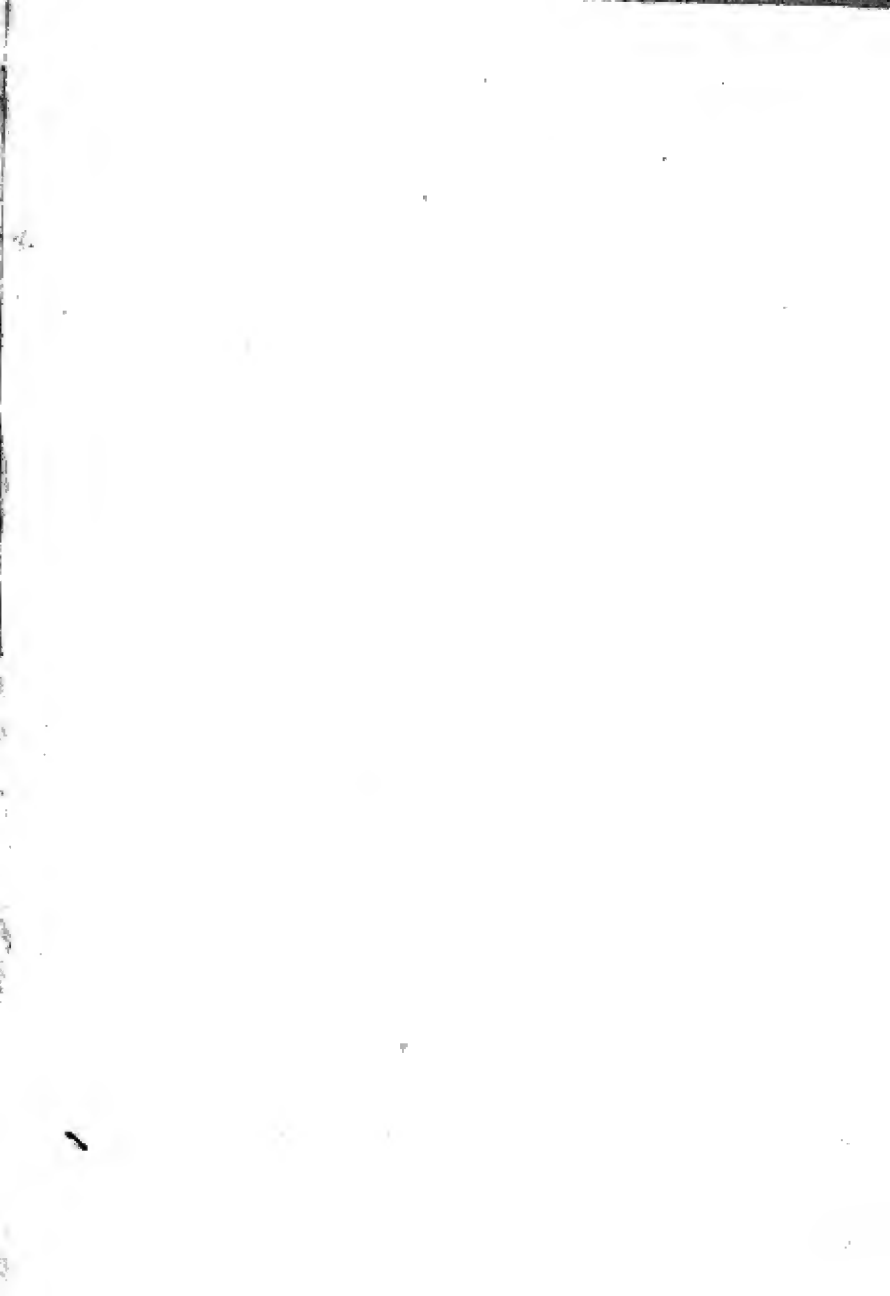


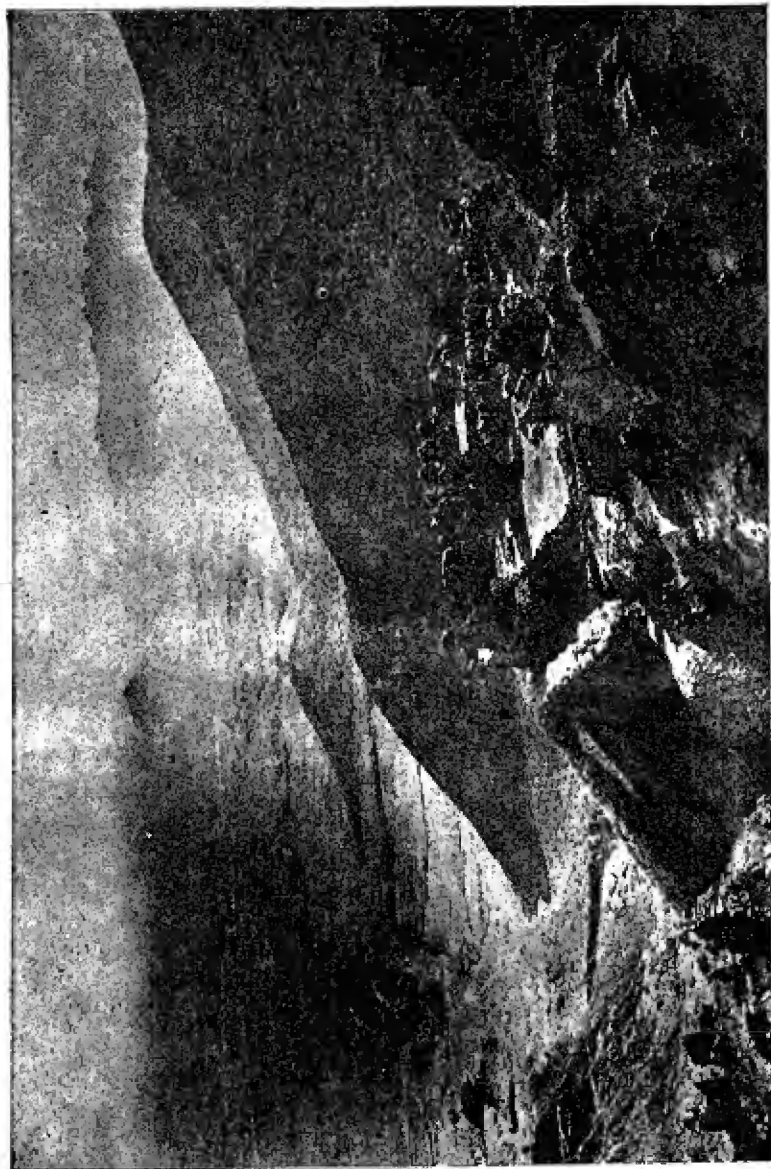
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General view of Takht-i-Bahi- from South-West.

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Guide To Takht-i-Bahi

18. 4. 49.

CHAPTER I

No.

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TOPOGRAPHY

The Buddhist remains of Takht-i-Bahi are situated about nine miles north of Hoti-Mardan, at a height of some 1823 feet above sea level and about 586 feet from the plains, east of the. Nowshera-Malakand Road. The actual remains occupy the crest and northern slope of a detached hill rising abruptly from the plains, and command an extensive view of the country around. This hill is an offshoot of the Paja ridge which is studded with the remains of the Buddhist period, such as Jamalgarhi, Tarale, Kashmir Smas, Palodheri and others. Surrounded, as Takht-i-Bahi is, by the fertile valleys of Baezai in the north, Sudam in the east, the plains of Yusufzai in the south and Muhammadzai in the west, it enjoys a position which no other Buddhist site in the heart of the ancient Gandhara region¹ can claim.

Location
of Takht-
i-Bahi
and gene-
ral char-
acter of
the coun-
try.

1. Roughly speaking, the present Peshawar Valley represents the ancient Gandhara Region. This name is attributed to an Arian patriarch (Gandarae) who established a colony in this valley. The name Gandhara occurs in ancient Vedic

Hundreds of ancient mounds found scattered in all directions in these valleys and plains are ample evidence of the existence of flourishing towns and villages, when Buddhism was the State religion.

From time immemorial the Baezai valley has been watered by several streams, which now flow in deep beds of hard clay, and pass through four separate clefts in the Paja ridge between Jamalgarhi and Takht-i-Bahi. The Bagiari and the Wuch-Khwar join their scanty waters under Kot Jungare, near Takht-i-Bahi; the Lund-Khwar and the Kalpani¹ unite half way between Takht-i-Bahi

Literature, and formed part of the Achaemenian Empire, having been conquered in the reign of Cyrus. In the Bahistan inscription of Darius the Gandharians appear among the subject people and distinct from the Indians. According to Greek historians the region once embraced the whole lower valley of the Kabul river down to the Indus; Bajaur, Swat and Buner on the north-north-east and the Kohat Toi in the south.

1. The Kalpani or *Chalpani* (deceitful water) receives this name because the crossing of this stream is rendered dangerous on account of sudden liability to floods and spates and through its ever-shifting quicksands. This stream is identified by General Cunningham with *Malamanōs* of Arian, which he joins with the *Suasos* and *Garaïos* as the tributories of the *Kophas* river, in the district of *Penkolitis*. This notice of it by the Greeks of Alexander's army would

and Jamalgarhi and receive the waters of Bagiari and its tributary at Gujargarhi. The Gadar Rud, after passing Katlang, flows through a gorge in the ridge immediately under Jamalgarhi. Each of the four openings mentioned above has been cut down to its present level by the annual floods of these rivulets during many centuries. What has been made possible by modern engineering feats for irrigating the thirsty lands of the Mardan and Swabi Sub-Divisions during the British occupation of this country is not likely to have escaped the notice of the keen sighted and practical Hindus of earlier days.¹ And, in all probability, the waters of all these streams to the north of the Paja ridge were collected during floodtimes by strong embankments, and afterwards distributed by irrigation channels over the plains to the south of Takht-i-Bahi and Jamalgarhi.

The Sudam valley, drained from ancient times by the Mukam Rud, lies between two parallel ridges of Paja and Karamar. This stream is not

seem to show that in his time the stream was of more importance than it is at present day. The Greek name *Malamantos* is slightly a corrupt form of the name Kalpani.

1. Those who have examined the large artificial lakes of Bundelkhand and Rajputana constructed by the old Hindu Rajas would at once arrive at this conclusion.

too deep to prevent its water being drawn by Persian wheels for the irrigation of land on each bank. There are traces on its banks of a much more extensive system of irrigation having existed in former days made by throwing across embankments at various points of the stream. These embankments might have been temporary ones, constructed annually of boulders, like those which are now made to divert small branches of the stream to turn water mills. The Mukam Rud joins the Kalpani near Toru and their combined waters are discharged into the Landai¹ river between Nowshera and Pir Sabak.

The plain to the west of Takht-i-Bahi, known as Hashtnagar² lies along the left bank of the Swat and Kabul rivers and used to be extensively cultivated and freely irrigated in the good old

1. The Kabul, Swat and Bara rivers and the Budni stream with all the drainage of the north-west, west and south-west, unite at Nisatta; and from that point to where the combined waters join the Indus, the stream is known as Landai or short river, in length only 36 miles.

2. Because of the eight towns situated on the left bank of the Swat river viz. Prang, Charsadda, Rajar, Utmanzai, Turangzai Umarzai, Sherpao and Tangi, this tract is called *Hashtnagar*. The name may be an alteration of the old name *Hastinagara* or city of Hasti or Astes of the Greek historians who was killed in the defence of one of his strongholds after a prolong siege by Hephaistion.

days. Most probably, the former populousness of this tract was due to the existence of canal systems. Such works can still be traced near Tangi, above the line of the present Swat Canal. And Canals were undoubtedly taken out of the Swat river opposite the present canal head; and also from the Kabul river two or three miles above Warsak. Owing to a network of these artificial water channels, this tract must have been the richest corner of the Kingdom of Gandhara, as its chief town Charsadda remained the capital of the region from prehistoric days till the third century A. D.

Such are the surroundings of the famous ruins of Takht-i-Bahi through which once passed the ancient trade route from Central Asia to Hindustan. The romantic situation of the site, with its magnificent view of the fertile plains below, and the encircling barren and parched mountains, have made it a familiar and favourite spot both with ancient Buddhist and European travellers of modern times. The comparatively easier accessibility, the extraordinary extent and the relatively good preservation of the ruins themselves are sufficient to explain the interest that has long been taken in them by archaeologists and the intelligentsia

of the country. No spot in ancient Gandhara region has been the object of so many excavations, both irregular and systematic, as the remains at Takht-i-Bahi. Interest in the site has been further widened by the fact that many of the best specimens of Gandhara sculptures now to be found in the museums of Europe and America were originally recovered from this site.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

Very little is known about the early history of Takht-i-Bahi. However much we regret it, the fact remains that the observant Chinese pilgrims to whose careful journals Indian Archaeology is so much indebted, do not mention this site which is of such unusual interest. It is possible that the site met the same fate as the other sixteen hundred religious establishments in Gandhara from the hands of the ferocious White Huns during the fifth century A. D. The earliest mention of the site is by General Court who writing in 1836, says 'To the north-east of Hashtnagar is the mountain of *Behhi*, standing alone on a vast plain; and close to it are the ruins of an ancient castle, which is attributed to Raja *Vara* and which, according to the traditions of the inhabitants, was the dwelling of the ancient sovereigns of this country'. The same name *Vara* was noticed by General Cunningham, who visited the site in 1848, and who later on attempted in vain to identify it with the famous Aornos of Alexander's historians. The place is also mentioned by General Abbott, who visited it in 1854, and described it

as the 'stable of Raja Virat'. In 1864, Dr. Bellew in his report on Yusufzai mentions that 'according to the Hindus of the country, these ruins were formerly the residence of Raja Bharat and the Pandu kings'. The excavations of Sergeant Wilcher at the site in 1871 failed to discover the true nature of the remains.

The name *Bahi*, or *Bahat*, which means a reservoir or *baoli*, has been applied to it locally, according to one tradition, on account of its possession of two small artificial tanks. One of these on the very crest of the hill is about eight feet square and regularly built; the other, which is hewn out of solid rock, is a few yards below the crest on its northern face at the western end of the ruins and is about fourteen feet square and twenty feet deep. Literally *Takht* means a seat and *Bahi* may be either a corrupt form of the *Vara* of Generals Court and Cunningham, or it may mean a *brother-in-faith*. In either case the meaning of *Takht-i-Bahi* would give countenance to another popular local story that it was the 'seat of Government' in ancient times.

In the absence of any reference to the site in ancient literature, the only alternative for a student of history and for those who are desirous of knowing the correct origin of the ruins, is to

piece together the evidence of coins and inscriptions, art and architecture, and other material found at the site, from which conclusions may be drawn. Because it is the study and correlation of such data which enables the antiquarian to produce a faithful and reliable account of Takht-i-Bahi and its early inhabitants with the least possible margin of error. The responsibility of studying and correctly interpreting these evidences was undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India during 1907-08. The results of scientific excavations conducted here by that Department together with the discovery of an inscription of the reign of Gondophares recovered earlier at the site have proved beyond doubt that the religious establishment of Takht-i-Bahi can safely be ascribed to a Buddhist origin, if not earlier, at least of the period of Gondophares (first century A. D.) to whose court the traditional story of Saint Thomas the Apostle is attributed ¹.

1. The *Acts of St. Thomas* (Syrian Text) say that the Apostle Thomas was sold to Habban, an emissary of king Gondophares for building a palace for him; and he is said to have converted the king. Later on St. Thomas was put to death by the *Medeus* to whom he went in obedience to his Lord's command. The legend of St. Thomas has thus been furnished with an historical setting which is chronologically possible.

It is generally assumed that the religious establishment of Takht-i-Bahi has met the same fate as that of the neighbouring country. It can therefore be definitely said that it had seen the rise and fall of three dynasties in rapid succession from the first to the fifth century A. D. viz. the Indo-Parthian, the Kushans and the Little Kushans, till its final destruction by the Ephthalites. It must be remembered here that this part of the country was previously ruled over by the Achæmenids, the Mauryans and the Bactrian Greeks. The coins of the rulers of these dynasties are however rarely found in the ruins at Takht-i-Bahi, for a religious establishment of this type is the least prolific of such finds. Yet the surrounding country has yielded a large number of these. During the first two centuries of the Christian Era, Gandhara was considered a 'second holy land of Buddhism' and was very prosperous too. All religious establishments in this holy land can therefore with certainty be assigned to this period, and Takht-i-Bahi, with its rich harvest of sculptures, cannot be an exception to this. From the early third century until about 400 A.D. Buddhism was still relatively vigorous and flourishing in these parts as recorded by Fa Hian. Song Yun.

another Chinese pilgrim, visited Gandhara in 520 A. D. and has recorded 'This is the country which the Ye-tha destroyed. . . since which event two generations have passed'. This must have happened towards the middle of the fifth century A. D., when this country was invaded by the White Huns, who expelled the Little Kushans from Gandhara. It was during this period that Turaman and his son Mihirgula destroyed sixteen hundreds Buddhist monastries in Gandhara, persecuted two-thirds of its inhabitants and reduced the remainder to slavery. The destruction of the monuments of Takht-i-Bahi may therefore date back to the same period.

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CHAPTER III

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

It is clear from the foregoing account that between the first and the fifth century A. D., the country round about Takht-i-Bahi was under the domination, successively, of three peoples; each of which left some impress upon the art and architecture of the monuments at Takht-i-Bahi. The Persians, Mauryans and Bactrian Greeks have also left certain traces of their works at the site. The history of art of Takht-i-Bahi is therefore synonymous with that of Gandhara, which may briefly be summed up as under: The only relics of any kind in which the Persian influence is discernable are the Indo-Persepolitan Capital (Pl. I. 1.) and the two Kharoshti inscriptions found at the site. The first displays familiar Persian design and motif given to capitals; and the discovery of the latter is of special interest in connection with the origin of the Kharoshti alphabet, which was derived from Aramaic and introduced, as it has generally been assumed, in the North-West of India by the Achaemenids after the conquest of the country about 500 B. C. Foreign motifs, such as the Indo-Corinthian Pilaster (Pl. I 2.)

Acanthus Capital, Modillion Cornice, Cupids and Garland (Pl. I. 3.), Marine Divinity (Pl. I. 4.) etc., etc., together with a coin of an Indo-Greek king Apollodotos speak of the Greek influence which is so strongly felt in the monuments of Takht-i-Bahi. The artistic elements, known to Indian Art previous to the appearance of the Gandhara School, whether indigenous or of foreign origin, such as the flora and fauna of India, beads and reel and saw-tooth moulding. (Pl. I. 5), horse-shoe arches (Pl. I. 6.), trapezoidal doorway, merlons (Pl. I. 7), etc., etc., appear prominently in the art and architecture of the monuments at Takht-i-Bahi. A few crude imitations of Greek forms observable in the art of the site is the only surviving influence of the Sakas, under whom the influence of Greek Art grew weaker. The discovery of the Kharoshti inscription of the reign of Gondophares referred to above, together with the best specimens of sculptures (Pl. II. and III.) found at the site speak of a fresh and powerful impulse given to Hellenism during the Parthian period. The diaper type of masonry of the buildings at Takht-i-Bahi also belong to this period.

Notwithstanding the sequence of historical events narrated above, hundreds of sculptures re-

covered from the site speak for themselves of their age. All of them were, undoubtedly, not manufactured, brought and dedicated at one and the same period. Some of them show a comparatively early period. Figures on (Pls. II, and III.) are the nearest to the Hellenistic prototype, and they can certainly be marked as the oldest evidence (1st. century A. D.). Others definitely show the 'trade mark' of the Kushan period (2nd. century A. D.); such as figures on Pl. IV. It was during this period that the Gandhara School of Art was in its full vigour and works of considerable merit were produced which appealed directly to the subconscious aesthetic sense of the 'faithfull'. There are still others, such as figures on Pl. V, which clearly mark complete decadence of the art towards the end of the third century A. D.

The ornamentation in stucco on the three stupas in the courtyard, marked F on the accompanying plan, together with stucco sculptures unearthed in this area (among which figure on Pl. IX, 1. stands out of particular interest) reveal yet the beginning of another period. It was about 400 A. D. or a little later, that there arose a new school of art in the land of the Afghans which gave a fresh lease of life to the dying.

elements of calssicism. This school is generally known among scholars as the Indo-Afghan School, since like its predecessor (Gandhara School) it originated in the North-West of India. The most remarkable feature of this school is that it shows markedly hellenistic influence, and this at a period when Greek art was dead everywhere else. Sir John Marshall in his *Guide to Taxila* refers to this school and says 'Whereas the artists of Gandhara art had tended always to be formal and academic, their Indo-Afghan successors, when unconstrained by the trammels of religious tradition, broke into a free and realistic mode of expression, which place their work among the most vital and vigorous products of Indian Art'.

1. Exceptions are the stucco figures of the first century A. D. found on the foundation base of the Apseid Temple at Sirkap (Taxila).

CHAPTER IV

MONUMENTS

The monuments of Takht-i-Bahi may be divided into two main groups and dealt with under the following separate blocks: I.—The Court of Many Stupas, The Main Stupa, The Monastery, The Conference Hall, The Low-level Chambers, The Court of Three Stupas; II.—The Covered Staircase, Courtyard H and some Secular Buildings, which are to be discussed in their close association with the main buildings referred to in Group I. The entire monastic complex would present to the reader a complete picture of a Buddhist religious establishment of the period, its plan and the purpose for which each block was set apart.

Court of
Many
Stupas,

The main entrance to the monastic enclosure is on the south, which is approached by descending 22 flight of steps. Having advanced from the entrance gate northward, the visitor will find himself in a courtyard, marked A on the accompanying plan. This court is 116 feet long from east to west and 50 feet broad from north to south, and contains as many as 35 little stupas.

This courtyard occupies a hallow between the Main Stupa to its south and the Monastery of the establishment to its north; and because of a large number of stupas in this small area, it is named the 'Court of Many Stupas'. This quadrangle is surrounded by lofty walls on the north, east and south, which still stand to a height of from 25 to 30 feet. These walls retain 30 lofty chapels of various dimensions, which are entirely open toward the court. None of the roofs of these chapels were found intact, but it is presumed that they were originally covered with domes of the same type that we find in the chapels round the Main Stupa. Seven of these domes on the northern side of the court are restored by the Archaeological Department to give an idea of their structure to the visitor. These chapels originally contained the images of either the Buddha, a Bodhisattva or a Buddhist Deity. Dr. Bellew and Sergeant Wilcher recovered fragments of statues of gigantic size in this area; 'four times the natural size' as the former described them.

As regards the 35 stupas in this courtyard, they were primarily funeral mounds erected either to enshrine some relics of the Buddha or of a Buddhist saint, or else to commemorate some specially sacred spot. The erection of a stupa

has always been regarded by the Buddhist as a work of great merit, which brings its author a step nearer to salvation. That is why so many of these are found in this quadrangle which is a further proof of the prosperity and sanctity of the religious establishment of Takht-i-Bahi during the Buddhist period. With the exception of two, the basements of other stupas are nearly square and were originally ornamented with stucco pilaster and decorated freizes, each surmounted by a cornice and separated by Indo-Corinthian pilaster with acanthus capitals. Owing to their exposure to all sorts of weather and the depredation wrought by treasure-trove seekers, the complete ornamentation no longer remains; but the excellent preservation of the Three Stupas, marked F on the plan, gives visitors an idea of the decoration with which these memorials were originally bedecked. Traces of these ornamentation are still to be seen here and there on some of these stupas.


The entire courtyard was filled with a mass of debris from nine to ten feet and the existence of not even a single stupa could be conjectured before the whole area was cleared. Of particular interest in the group of these stupas are the two, marked I and II, with circular and octogal base.

ments, respectively. The latter contains eight niches on the sides, with ogee arches, for holding sculptures. In the eastern half of the court there is a raised platform, measuring 30' x 20', marked III, which is reached by a flight of five steps on the western side. This platform, as suggested by General Cunningham, might have held one large stupa with two smaller ones at each end.

The Court of Many Stupas is bisected north-south by a paved passage running between little stupas and connecting courts B and C, both of which lie at a higher level than Court A. The former is approached by a flight of 15 steps. Ascending these steps to the south, the visitor enters an oblong court, measuring 56'.6" x 45'.6". There is a square platform in the middle of the court which was originally approached by a few steps, now in ruins. This is the Main Stupa. The steps leading to the top of the basement were meant to enable the pious to ambulate round the stupa itself. The basement of the stupa is a square of 20½', at a height of 8½' from the ground. The lower stage is three feet high with ten pilasters on the side; the middle stage is only nine inches in height and the upper one is three feet four inches high with six pilasters on the side. These measurements would indicate that the actual

Main
Stupa.

body of the stupa could not, therefore, have been more than 12 feet in diameter and about 20 feet in height.

Round this courtyard on three sides rise a number of chapels, originally five on each side. It is obvious from the structure of these buildings, that as first planned, these chapels were separated one from another by a considerable space, which at a later date, when the court became crowded with images, was built up into miniature shrines completely closing the court on the east, south and west. Fortunately, it is precisely here that the only superstructure extant (Pl. VI 1.) in the whole site is to be found,¹ but even here only two of the chapels retain their original roofing, while a third has the lower part of its dome and collar partly preserved. Visitors will be interested to study these structures with their conjectural restoration,  (Pl. VI 2.) attempted by Percy Garden, in his recently published book entitled 'The Hindu and Buddhist Architecture in India'. The purpose for which these chapels were intended may be gathered from their sculptural representations as well as from the remains of statues which have

1. With the exception of the vaulted passages to be discussed hereafter.

been found lying in front of them. It is from these sources that we know that they were originally erected for holding a figure of either a Buddha, Bodhisttva, either alone or accompanied by devotees, dedicated to the memory of holy men.

The largest block of building at the site is the Monastery, marked C on the plan. This quadrangle is 62 feet square inside, with 15 cells arranged on three sides. This courtyard is reached from the Court of Many Stupas on the south by a short flight of 5 steps. This area was so much choked with debris that the fact of there being cells round it at all was hardly apparent, and the interest in the appearance of the court effected by its excavation can therefore be imagined. A sculpture of special interest found in this area is the ascetic Gautama (Pl. IX. 2.) That these cells were meant for residence of monks can hardly be doubted. With the exception of two cells at the corner in the north and south, which are larger, others measure about 9'.10" x 8' 5". Each of these contain a ventilator and from one to three niches inside for keeping books and articles as well as for holding oil lamps at night time. Each of these cubicles could comfortably accommodate a single monk. In the south-east quarter of the square there is a water

Monas-
tery.

tank which, as General Cunningham says, 'was probably filled by drainage from the roof'. However, there is no evidence on the spot to support his view. Nor could it be possible. It is more plausible to conjecture that the tank was filled with water brought by the 'faithful' from the spring below which would earn for them eternal blessings from the Community of the establishment. This is more convincing, because of the fact that the monastery court was not roofed. Near the middle of the blank wall on the eastern side, there is a doorway leading into a small court, measuring 20 feet square, marked *a* on the plan. This is the kitchen of the establishment. To the north it has two openings, one leading to the upper storey of the monastery by a flight of nine steps; and the other to the outside of the building. To the east there are two more openings. In the southern wall of the kitchen there is a single doorway leading into another court, measuring 32' \times 30', marked *b* on the plan. This courtyard is the refectory attached to the kitchen. Taking into consideration the details of the plans of the monasteries at Giri, Julian and Pipalan, published by Sir John Marshall in his *Guide to Taxila*, the identification of these two courts cannot be doubted.

That the Monastery was a double-storeyed building can easily be inferred from the steps leading from the kitchen to the upper storey. This second storey contained, probably, as many cells as there are on the ground floor, and, therefore, in all probability, the Monastery could accommodate at least, 30 monks at a time. The roofs of these cells no longer exist, but they were originally covered with overlapping domes, which have fallen in.

Outside the Monastery on the west there is a large courtyard 50 feet square inside, which is marked D on the plan. This courtyard is surrounded by lofty walls, 30 feet high, with only one entrance to the south, and is separated from the Monastery by a blind passage which is 50 feet long and 5 feet wide. The outer walls on the north and west of this enclosure rise from the hill side, but accumulated debris within the court has gradually forced them out, with the result that the middle portion of the wall on the west has already fallen and the one to the south is likely to collapse at any moment. This was the place for general meetings of the Fraternity. Five small niches in the interior of the walls of the court for oil lamps, would indicate that some meetings may have been held during night time.

Conference
Hall.

The fact that the compound of the court is devoid of structure of any type, such as we find in other courts, together with the fact that the single opening and the high walls would secure privacy, the use of this enclosure could not be other than that of a Conference Hall¹.

Low-level
Cham-
bers.

To the south of the Conference Hall there are two rows of cells, five on each side of a vaulted passage running north and south between them. The roof of the vaulted passage and the cells, consisting of corbelled arches, are 14 feet high and are covered with a thick layer of earth, levelled with the Court of Many Stupas. Hence they are generally taken for 'underground chambers', but in reality they are not. That these cells were constructed later than the retaining wall of Court A is obvious from the fact that they are built against and not bonded with that wall. A narrow stair which turns to the west and again to the north, containing 22 steps in all, leads from the south-east of the roof down to the vaulted passage of the chambers which are

¹ Conservation work in Courtyard D has recently proved that previous excavations in this area were not carried on to the virgin soil.

thus entered from the south through an arched doorway. This vaulted passage is about 60 feet long and 8 feet broad, inside. The cells on the east of this central passage are larger than those on the west, the former ranging in size from 8'.4" \times 15'.2" to 8'.6" \times 13'.3"; the latter from 11'.6" \times 8'.6" to 8'.6" square. A debris of nine feet was removed from inside of cells which had completely blocked their doorways. Two of these doorways to the cells, one on each side of the central passage, are in perfect state of preservation, the one to the west with straight sides and flat stone lintal, the other to the east arched in true Gandhara style.

The cells on the east, being built against the retaining wall referred to above, are exceedingly dark, the only light reaching them being the few stray beams which find their way through the doorways on the west and the main entrance on the south. These cells, in all probability, were meant for monks for practising their austerities (*chillas*). A few corroded copper coins, among which one of the Indo-Greek king Apollodotos is of particular interest; a few fragments of sculptures and some pieces of black and red pottery inscribed in Kharoshti, (Pl. VII. 1.) and with a human figure, (Pl. VII. 2.) respectively, were found in this

area in the course of excavations. The inscription on the fragment of the black pottery contains seven *aksharas*, each with an average height of $5/8''$, and is read as *Samghe chadudise ka.....* which means 'To the (Buddhist) Community of four quarters' Since this epigraph closely resembles the votive inscription on the jars found at Palatu Dheri¹ (Charsadda), therefore this has led some archaeologists to take these cells for 'graneries' of the establishment of Takht-i-Bahi. But this is not sufficient proof to warrant such a hasty conclusion.

Court of
Three
Stupas

To the south of the Low-level Chambers there lies a courtyard, marked F on the plan. It is bounded on the north by a high retaining wall, 70 feet long, which forms the southern boundary of Court H. To the west lies a damaged ravelment while on the east are two structures forming the western limit of the passage lying between the Main Stupa and the one under discussion. This courtyard is 70 feet long and 47 feet 8 inches wide. Beneath this courtyard runs a covered staircase to be discussed hereafter. An arched gate in the southern wall gives access to the court in question, the level of which is reached by descending a flight of six steps. On the nor-

¹ Annual report of the Archaeological survey of India 1902-03, page 163.

thern side and almost immediately opposite these steps traces of three others are found. This would indicate that, in all probability, there formerly existed a way from this courtyard to the roof of the Low-level Chambers, over the roof, now not there, of a little room which lies between them.

There are three stupas in this courtyard, two of which measure 4'. 6" square each, and the third one 21 feet square. The first two are in a wonderful state of preservation and the base of the third one is almost complete, but the freize, except on the south, is entirely destroyed. All the three stupas are ornamented in stucco with two freizes, each surmounted by a cornice. Their elaborate decoration is of particular interest. In the case of the smaller stupas the one to the west, (Pl. VIII. 1.) which is comparatively well preserved, its lower freize shows four panels separated by Indo-Corinthian pilasters with acanthus capitals. In each panel is a figure of seated Buddha, either in the attitude of meditation or with the right hand raised in the attitude of imparting protection. The upper freize is more varied and shows five standing figures between elaborate double superposed pilasters. Each figure stands as if under the flat roof of a *vihara* whose sloping sides spring from the base of the upper pilaster. Three of the figures have lost

the *ushnisha*,* but all undoubtedly represent the Buddha in various *mudras*.† The spring of the dome is also preserved and shows the familiar motif of the sitting Buddha figure in the attitude of meditation, separated by pilasters. Many of the figures still preserve their original red colouring. On the south face of the stupa on the moulding of the upper freize is a stucco relief unfortunately much damaged. Traces of eight figures still remain, one on the left being an adoring male figure.

The small stupa to the east is similar except that here sitting figures predominate and the superposed pilasters show a variation, the lower ones having circular, the upper square shafts. The large stupa is of the usual type—a low plinth with crouching lions supporting a cornice with plain mouldings, above which is a series of nine panels separated by Indo-Corinthian pilasters, the whole ornamented by a modillion cornice. The ornamentation is entirely in stucco and, with one exception, each panel contains a

* A protuberance on the skull.

† They are found in the following *mudras* (attitudes)

1. With right hand upraised (*abhaya-mudra*).
2. With right hand extended to the ground palm out-ward (*vara-mudra*).
3. With right hand concealed in the robe.

well-modelled figure of the Buddha, seated in the attitude of meditation. The exception is the central panel which shows an entirely novel variation— for, instead of a Buddha figure or a legendary scene, there is what has generally been accepted as a representation of Panchika, the genius of riches and his wife Hariti, the goddess of fertility. These figures (Pl. VIII. 2.) are described in detail by Mr. Hargreaves in the following words :

They are shown seated in European fashion side by side, on a low throne, the female to the proper left. The right hand of the god rests on his thigh, while the left grasps a money bag, the left elbow resting in a natural and familiar attitude on the right shoulder, of his consort who bears in both hands a cornucopiae by her left side. The god is clad in a short garment terminating just above the bare knees. Over this is a sleeveless robe which covering the upper part of the body and held at the waist by a girdle, falls as a second and shorter skirt almost to the edge of the undervestment. The arms are bare save at the shoulders where short frilled sleeves of some undergarment are seen under the edge of uppermost robe. On each wrist is a bracelet and round the neck a jewelled torque, the upper garment being caught near the right breast by a large circular brooch-like ornament. The hair is elaborately treated showing below a fillet a ring of spiral curls co-

vering the forehead, while above is a *krobulos*-like top-knot. The feet are clad in buskins reaching to the middle of the calf. The right foot appears to have rested on a footstool, the left, slightly raised, resting against the front of the throne. The face is turned towards the female who is clothed in well-draped garments falling to the feet. A short tight-fitting bodice terminating just below the well-developed breasts covers the upper part of the body. The gracefully curled hair is dressed high above the forehead and shows in front a circular star-like ornament. The cornucopiae is held on her left, the lower end which rests in the lap being grasped by the right hand, the left hand supporting it near the breast. Indications of a nimbus round the head of the female figure still exist and apparently the head of Kubera was similarly adorned.

As to the identification of the male figure as Panchika, there can be no doubt; for the money bag is obviously the attribute of the god of wealth. The female figure is undoubtedly Hariti, the consort of Panchika, holding cornucopiae in her lap which has tentatively been identified and ascribed to Demeter.

Seven feet of debris was removed in order to expose these stupas; to which we owe their excellent preservation. At present they are protect-

ed under a tiled roof by the Department of Archaeology.

To the south of the Courtyard F there is a wall, measuring 17'8" in height and some 40 feet in length, running from the arched doorway mentioned above to the west. The discovery of a low platform, four feet six inches wide, at the base of this wall, on which were found in situ and almost intact, six pairs of feet in stucco, the remains of as many colossal standing Buddha figures, leave little doubt that it was the wall which supported both the figures themselves and the pent-roof, which projecting to the edge of the platform, sheltered them from the effects of weather. Each foot is 2 feet in length and between the separate pairs of feet were found two small stucco figures of the Buddha. Portions of the drapery and limbs of these colossi were found in the debris and also the greater portion of two heads in good condition. From chin to forehead these measure 2'2". 'If anything like the classical standards had been maintained, says Mr. Hargreaves, the complete statues could not have been less than 20 feet high'. But if the purpose of the wall, protecting these statues, has been correctly interpreted, they cannot have been more than 16 feet. 'In the case of the most of the colossi of this period, continues Mr. Hargreaves further,

there is a tendency to coarseness in the modelling of the face; but here, less than usual, while the naturalistic treatment of the hair is particularly graceful and pleasing'. See Pl. IX. 1.

Covered
Staircase.

Under the Court of Three Stupas lies a vaulted passage running east west, with a total length of 100 feet, containing 45 steps. This long and curiously covered staircase, after descending in 36 steps, for about 70 feet, to the west, abruptly ends in a well-built platform overhanging the *nullah*, but this is not the real termination, as it is continued further towards the south and then turns westward with nine steps more for a distance of 21 feet, and is finished in an arched doorway, which seems, indeed, to have been its original termination and the western entrance to the monastic complex. It was, in all probability, from this doorway that a pathway led round the head of the *nullah* to the secular buildings on the opposite ridge. The roof of this arched way is of usual Gandhara type. The east end of the passage, being uncovered, was the natural outlet for water to the west of the Main Stupa Court. This has clearly been recognised, for a covered *pacca* drain runs along the edge of the staircase, its outlet being still in perfect condition a few inches below the top of the platform at the west end of the principal section of the staircase.

It has already been mentioned that there is one main entrance in the south to the Low-level Chambers and two doorways to them on the west. The last two are leading to them from Courtyard H of the accompanying plan. The eastern half of this courtyard is 77'.6" long and the western half 100 feet, while its breadth is 50'.6". This courtyard is bounded on the north partly by a wall of a double storeyed building and partly by another wall rising abruptly from the hill side; on the east by the back wall of the chambers on the west; on the south by the retaining wall of the Court of Three Stupas and on the west by a massive wall rising from the hill side above the *nullah*. The purpose of this courtyard could very likely be for monks to enjoy sunshine after their prolong privation in the cells referred to above. There is a re-entrant to the western wall of the courtyard, with an average breadth of 11 feet, in the inner side. This is built to strengthen the wall.

Courtyard H.

There is a large number of private dwellings which are still standing on the hill of Takht-i-Bahi, and which show that the place must once have been of great consequence. Most of these houses are two-storeyed, the access to the upper one being invariably on the outside. In some cases the steps are mere projecting stones inserted at

Secular Buildings

intervals in the outside wall; but, in most cases there is a substantial flight of steps, supported on a pointed arch of overlapping stones. Most of these private houses consist of two rooms, from 10 to 12 feet square, placed one above the other. The walls of these houses are built of uneven stones, very carefully laid so as to present a tolerably smooth surface outwards, the interstices of each course being filled up with thin flat pieces to bring them to a level. A thin mortar has been used to fill up the interstices inside the walls, while the exterior is invariably covered with a coating of lime mortar mixed with sand.

The doors of these private houses are generally low, many of them being 4'6" in height. The rooms would therefore have been very dark; but the use of windows appear to have been very general. Sometimes these are placed just over the door, but more usually in the opposite wall just under the roof. In the latter case, the sill or lower edge is bevelled from the outside downwards, so as to distribute the light over the room.

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ERRATAS

Page—9 Line 22 *read say for sny.*

Page—21 Line 5 *delete* , after Buddha and *read or*
between Buddha and Bodhisttva.

Page—24 Line 18 *read built for buils.*

Page—26 Line 29 *read Survey for survey.*



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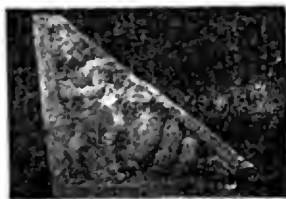
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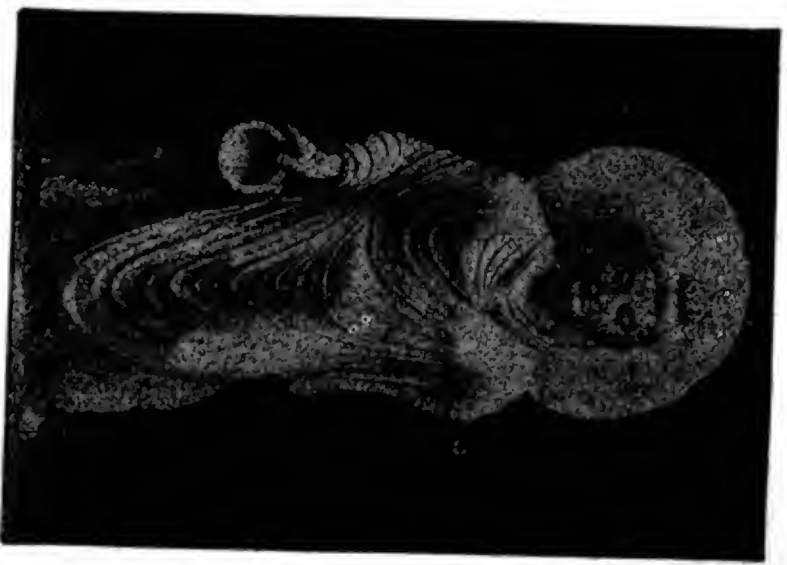
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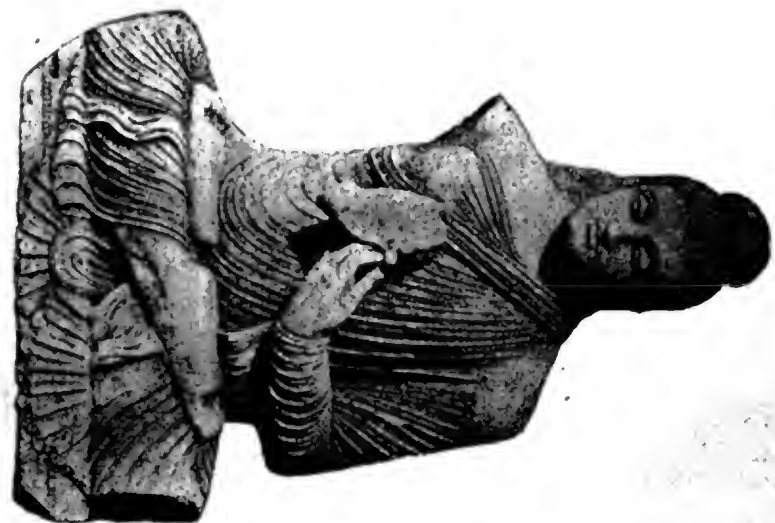


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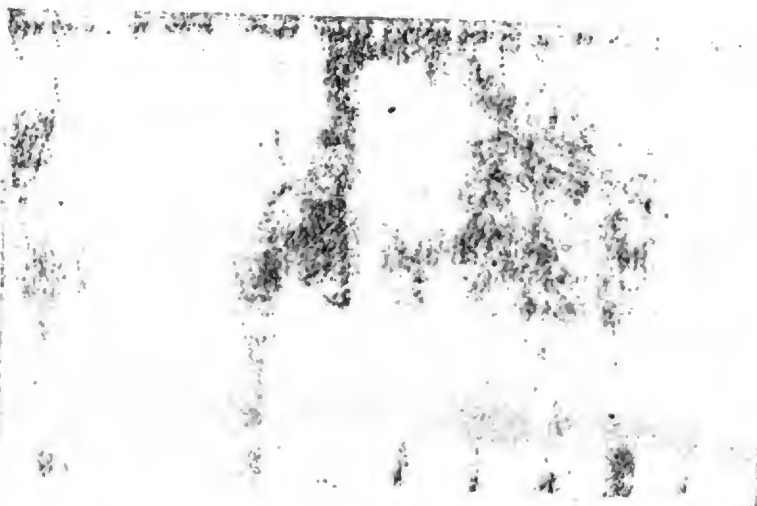




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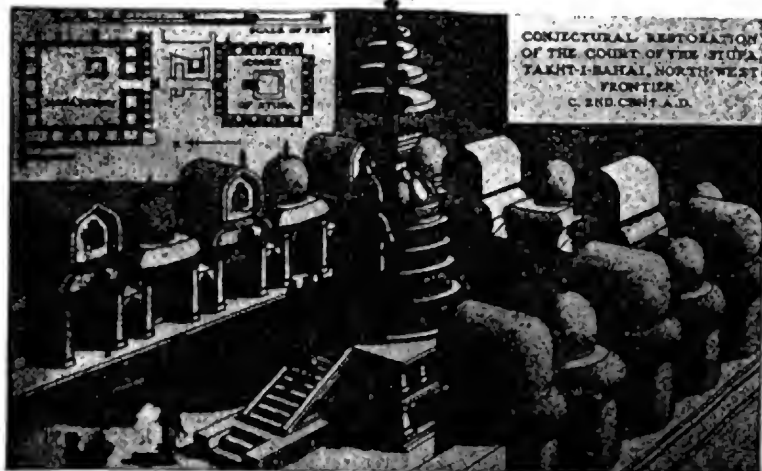


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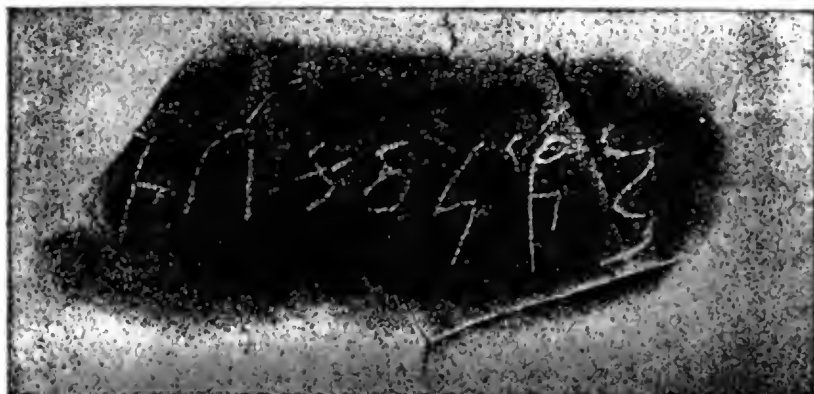


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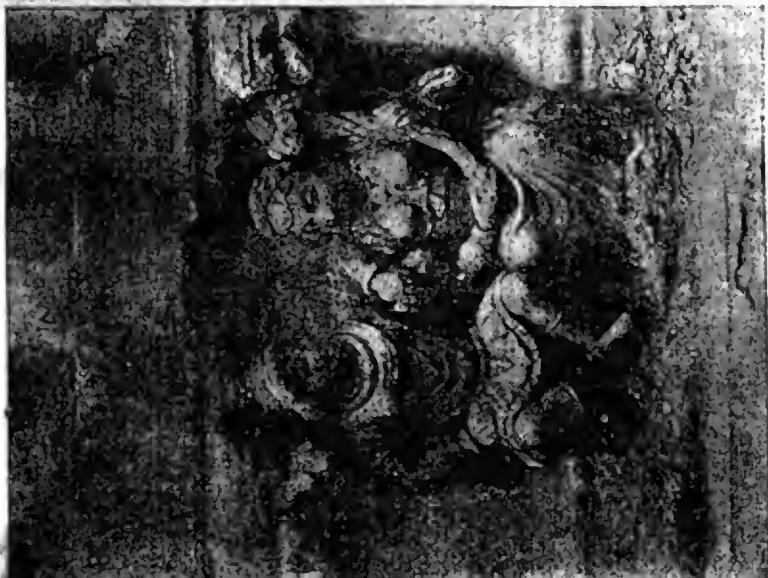


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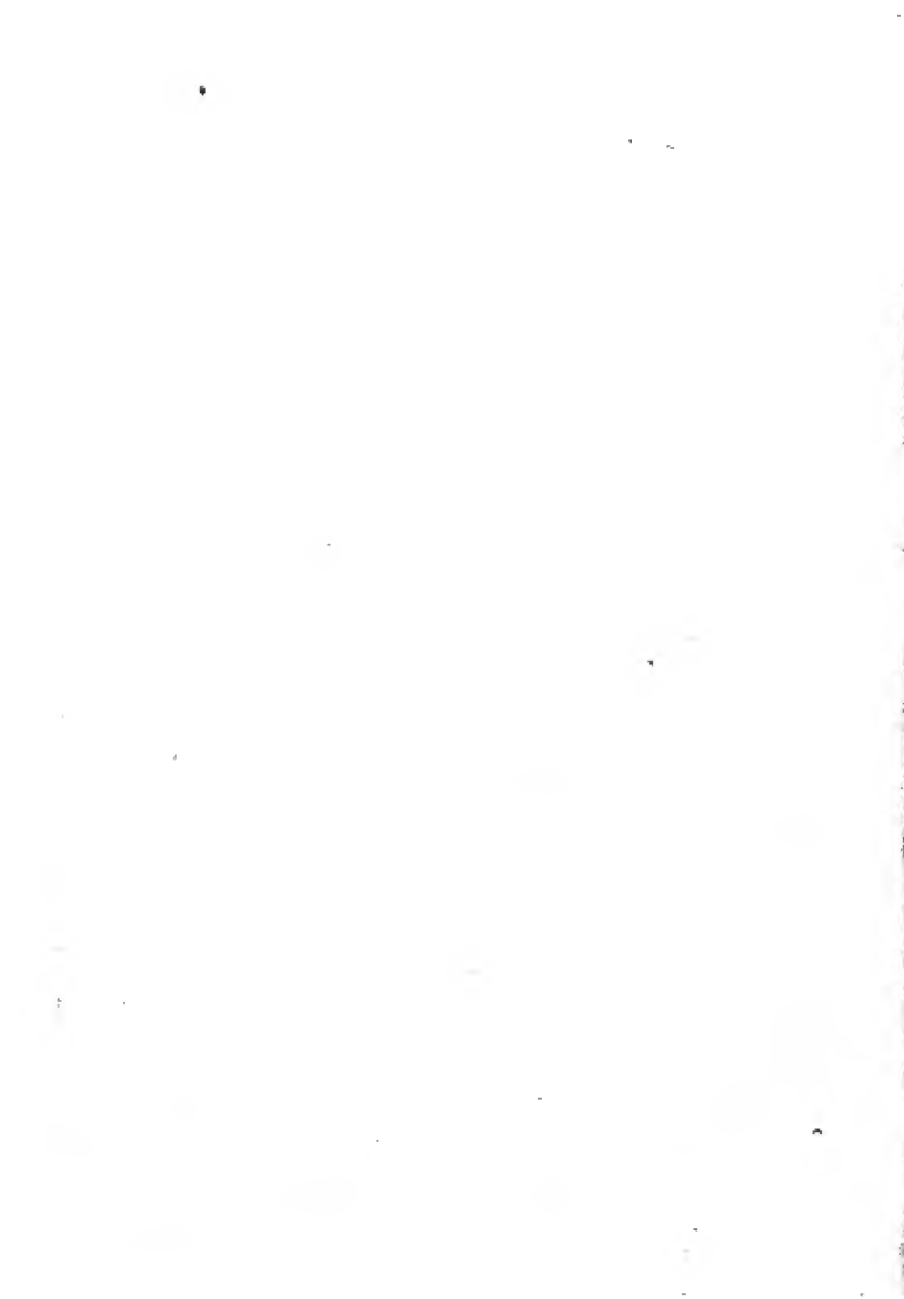
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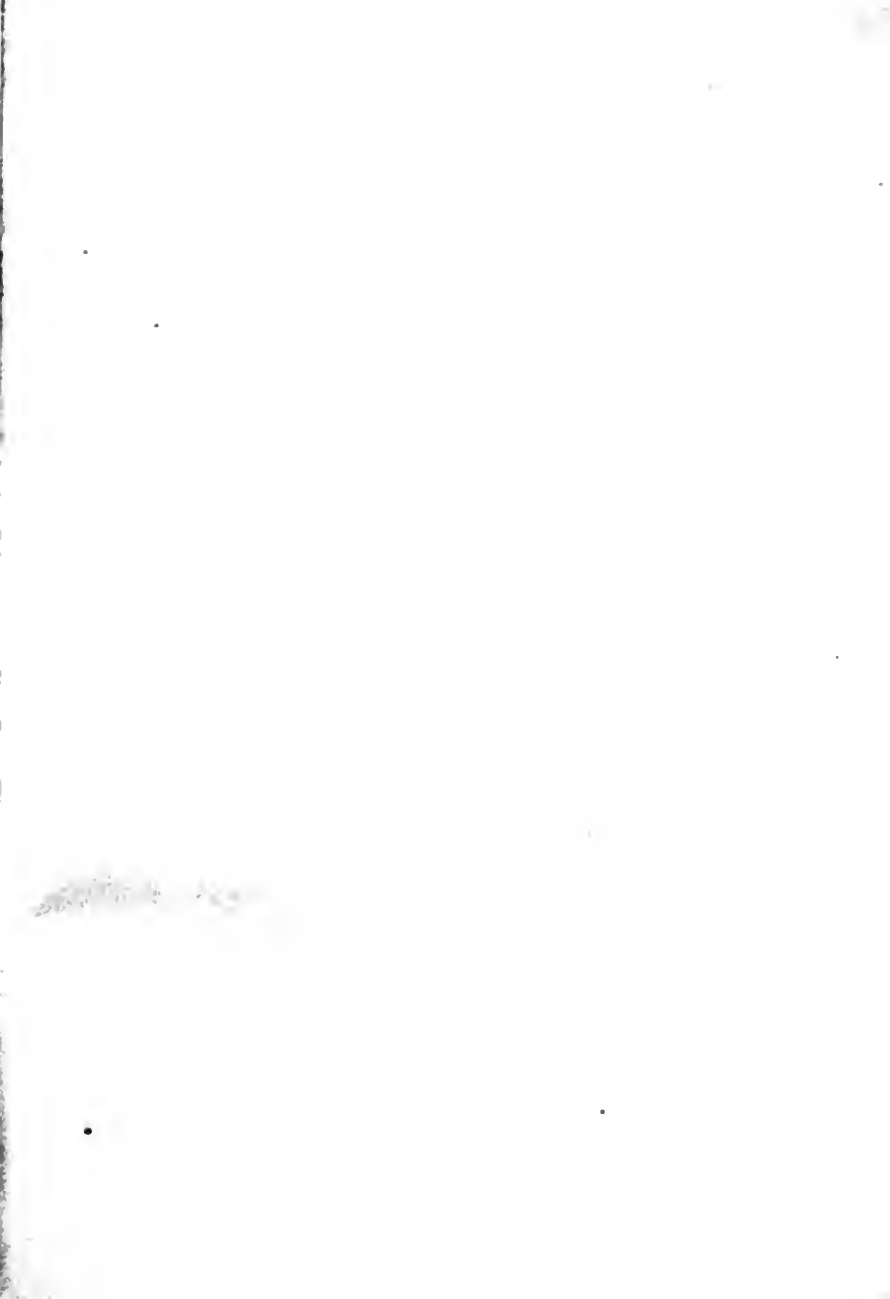


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REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE SURVEY DURING THE YEAR 1900

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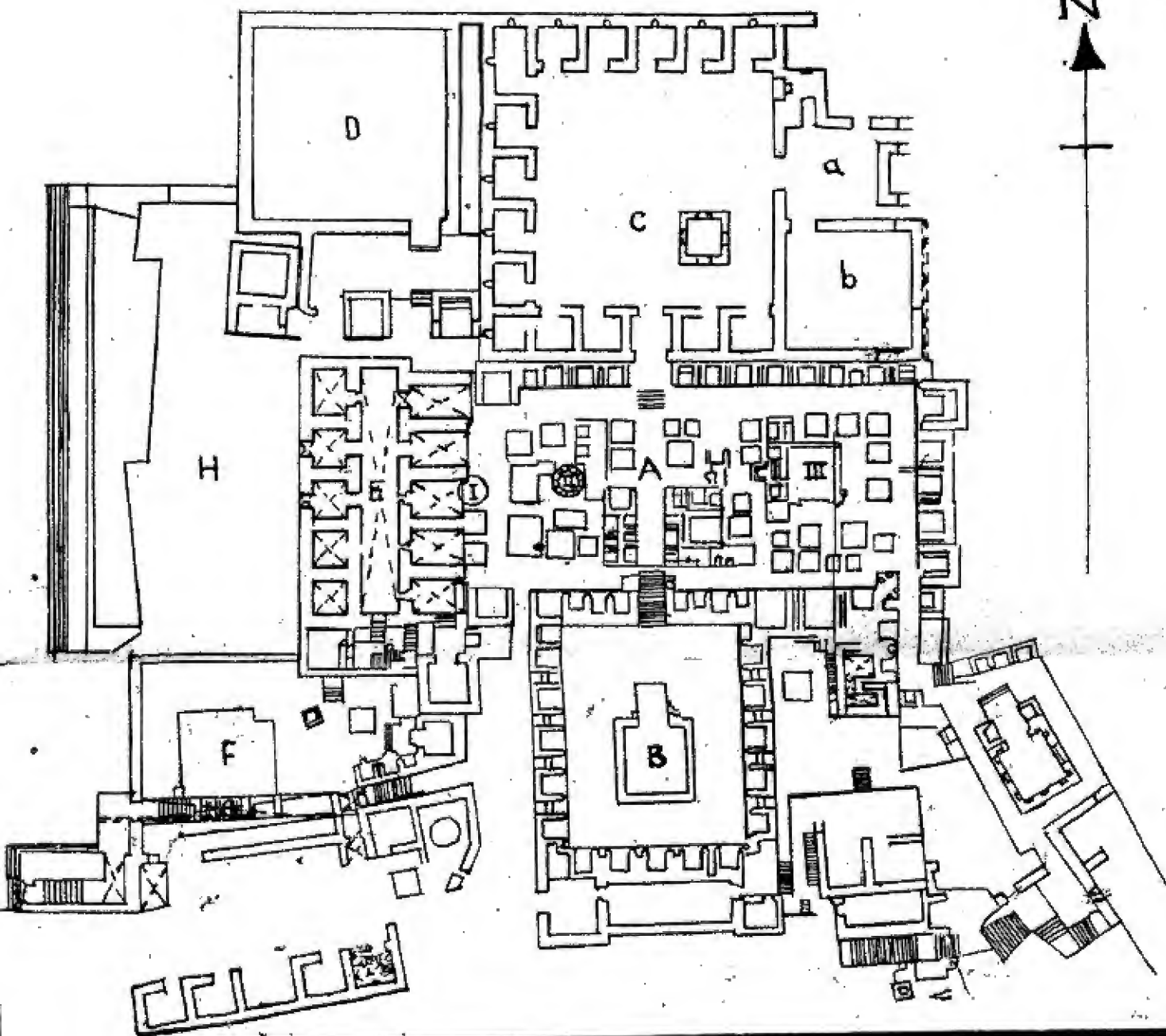
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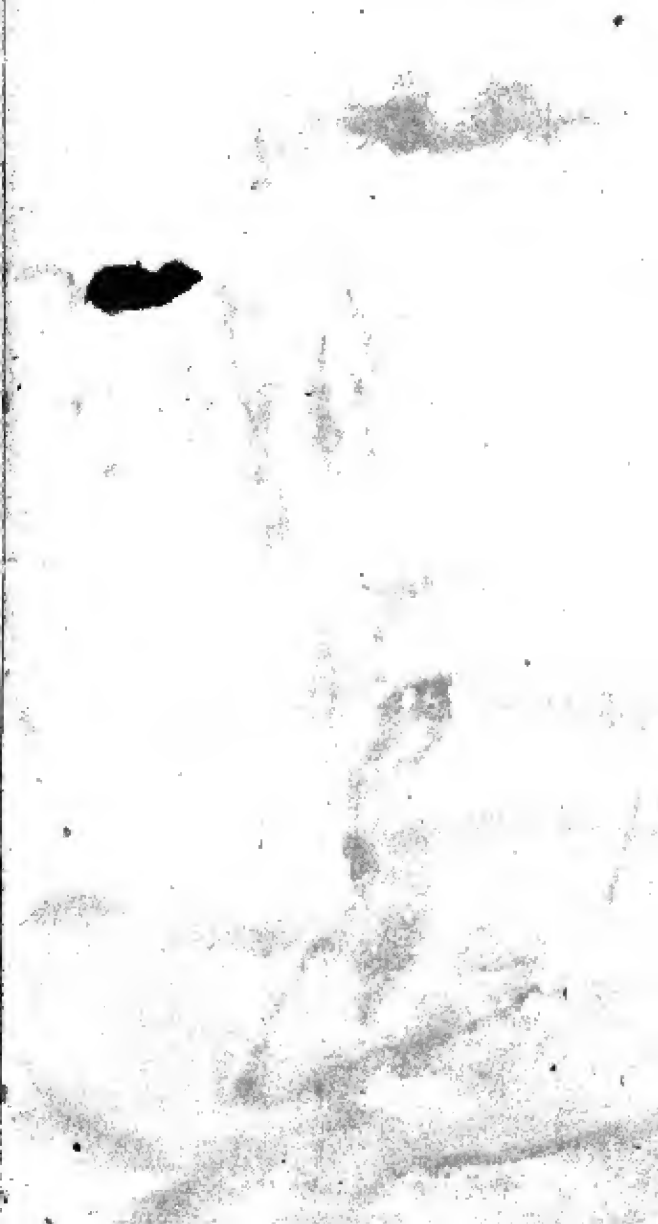


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